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AN ACCOUNT OF MR. EDWARD JACKSON.

(Concluded from page 246.)

In 1783, when in York, he received the afflicting intelligence of his Sister's dangerous illness. Fraternal affection prompted him to visit her, and teach her how to die : But a sense of public duty detained him in his Circuit. Her affliction was of long continuance ; during which he frequently wrote, giving her advice and consolation as her state required. All his letters shew that he was more concerned for her everlasting interests, than for the recovery of her bodily health. His greatest joy was when he heard that the Lord had manifested his favour to her soul. On that occasion he wrote to her husband as follows :

" Dear Brother,

July 4, 1804.

" It gave me great satisfaction to hear of the Lord's great goodness and mercy in comforting my sister's soul in such a wonderful manner. Surely she may say with David, ' What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me ? ' You may now plainly see the love of God to mankind ; and that he afflicts their bodies, that they may be partakers of his holiness. This instance of his love shews that he is a prayer-hearing, a promise-keeping God ; and that, when we are willing to be saved in his own way, he will reveal his mercy to us. I do not wonder that Satan tries various ways to make my sister doubt of the reality of the work of grace upon her mind. When he throws his fiery darts at the soul, it will feel the force of temptation. But it is no sin to be tempted. She must endeavour to trust in the Lord, when she is not comforted in such a manner as she has sometimes been. It is a blessing to any one to feel no condemnation,

and a firm trust in him. But to her who has been just brought to the gates of death, and has found his love, it is a blessing indeed ! You should desire her to speak as she is able, to those that are about her, concerning the salvation of their souls. I hope it will do J. J. good to see his sister reduced almost to a skeleton, and yet happy in God. Desire her to advise and exhort her children. Although they are young, some word, dropped by their dying mother, may be recollected by them hereafter for their spiritual profit. As God has done so much for her, she should endeavour to do some little for him, by persuading others to seek his face. It seems her time here will not be long ; and then farewell bodily pain ; farewell temptation for ever. I can truly say what the Lord has done for her encourages me to go on in the good way. Our near and dear relative will only get a little the start of us : for we are on our journey through the wilderness ; and I would say to your soul and mine,——

‘ Then let us lawfully contend,
And fight our passage through,
Bear in our faithful minds the end,
And keep the prize in view.’

“ I shall expect to hear from you soon. If my sister be living, let me know particularly how her soul prospers. If she has bid adieu to all below, let me know *when* and *how* she finished her course. I do not forget you at the Throne of Grace ; and I hope the Lord will ever remember you and yours for good. I bless God I am well in body, and happy in Jesus. Peace be with you. My love to my sister, and tell her I hope we shall meet above. I am, &c.”

In 1784, he was stationed in Chester. While single he had been successfully striving to give his whole heart to God, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. He now judged it to be his duty to change his state, and becoming acquainted with Miss Cliffe of Broomhall, whose father’s hospitable house was, for many years, an agreeable home for the preachers when in these parts, they were married in June 1785. At the next and the subsequent

Conference, he was appointed to the Colne Circuit. Here he saw blessed fruits of his labours. Many were converted to God, and he could anticipate with joyful expectation, the harvest, when such souls as shall be found fully ripe for glory, will be gathered into the heavenly garner.

His sister continued to linger for years on the verge of the grave. His Letters to her, not only shew the piety of the writer, but contain such advice as may afford consolation to others, who are exercised by long afflictions. From a Letter which he wrote to her, Sept. 3, 1785, I extract the following sentences.

“ Dear Sister,

“ When I look back, and consider your long affliction, and that, contrary to all expectation, the Lord has lengthened out your life, I am ready to say, Surely he has some wise end in view in this, and will make your sufferings work for good. You have already seen, and tasted something of his goodness ; but greater things are yet before you. If you are watchful and diligent in prayer, no doubt you will receive a greater measure of that happiness in God, that is not to be found in the things of this life. I would advise you, if possible, to read some portion of God’s word every day, and examine yourself, and labour to know perfectly how matters stand between God and your soul. We should often ask ourselves that question, Is my heart right with God ? If He should this day call me, am I ready ? Remember, faith in the blood of Christ brings a present salvation.”

Jan. 26, 1786, he wrote to her husband thus :

“ I am sorry to find that my sister is worse. Indeed, her affliction is tedious and heavy. But I know no way so good as to endeavour to exercise faith and patience. If she trust in the Lord, she will find that he does all things well ; and what she cannot see or know so fully now, she will know hereafter. Exhort her to hold fast her confidence in the Lord a little longer. It should still be the language of her heart, ‘ Though he slay me, yet will

I trust in him.' The longest time is short when compared with eternity : and if her soul be saved in the end, all will be well.

" You say the enemy tempts you to reason about her affliction. But you will find it safer to *pray* than to *reason*. For, through prayer, you may expect the Lord to help you, and give you resignation to his will. By reasoning you will only distress yourself to no purpose. May Jesus help you both to bear the trials you meet with, and to say, 'The will of the Lord be done.'

During the last twenty years of his life, Mr. Jackson continued to act on the principles on which he had commenced his religious course. He invariably kept the right end in view. The cares and pleasures of a domestic life, had no power, either to distract his mind, or damp his zeal for God : but he practised in the bosom of his family, the precepts he had enforced in public assemblies.

Though employed in various parts of the Lord's great vineyard, his work was one, and was always performed in the same spirit. Cordial and constant in his attachment to the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, he was faithful to declare the whole counsel of God to the people. He never indulged in refined speculations on those important subjects, but in simplicity and godly sincerity, taught the truth of God to the people, as he found it in the Sacred Scriptures. It was wrought into his experience, and exemplified in his practice. As a *Preacher*, he never sought popular applause : but applied the weapons of his spiritual warfare to overturn the strong holds of Satan's kingdom ; to produce a saving effect in the hearts and lives of his hearers. He loved the discipline of the Methodists. To its authority he willingly submitted, and was inflexible in his efforts to exercise the same among the people who had voluntarily engaged to observe it. He knew that if Methodism fall, it is not so likely to fall before its open enemies, as by means of the alterations, and supposed improvements made by its professed friends. Mr. Jackson strove to keep the system pure, and to transmit it entire to the succeeding generation.

The last field of his labours, was the Burslem Circuit. The first year he spent there, he had the pleasure of seeing a great revival of the power of godliness. It must be allowed, that some irregularities attended this work, of which, neither he, nor any of its best friends could fully approve. But as the drunkard became sober, and the idle diligent in business; as the language of piety, truth, and kindness, flowed from lips which had lately poured forth oaths and blasphemies; as the power of reigning sins was broken; and men, who had been entirely subject to vice, appeared among the most free and active servants of righteousness; the friends to religion acknowledged the work to be of God, and gave glory to him for effecting such a change in men's hearts and lives, willingly honouring the instruments he had chosen to employ. That year more than three hundred members were added to the society, many of whom are now happy in the enjoyment of true religion, and adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things. At the Conference in 1805, he was appointed to the same Circuit. His colleague was Mr. Edward Millar, whose ardent mind, entering fully into the work, prompted him to use indefatigable exertions, in regulating and promoting it. God was with them. The congregations were greatly enlarged; and every quarterly visitation of the Classes shewed that many were added to their number.

Mr. Jackson, though far advanced in life, being in the 66th year of his age, and the 29th of his itinerancy; and though on account of former services, entitled to some indulgence, omitted no part of his ministerial work. He not only punctually performed the regular and stated duties of his office; but stood ready for any extraordinary service. In the present state of the connexion, it sometimes happens that one part of the Preacher's work, and certainly the least pleasant of any, is to make collections for Chapels. In the Spring of 1806, he made a journey, on this business, into a neighbouring Circuit. The inclemency of the weather, occasioned his taking a severe cold, and produced a complaint in his bow-

els, from which he never was completely restored, till death ended at once his service and his suffering.

He was, for several weeks, in a declining state of health, but continued to labour in his Master's vineyard, till within one week of his dissolution. The last time he preached was the Tuesday before he died, at a village three miles from Burslem. Not wishing to spare himself, his exertions were beyond his strength. The next day he walked home, but not without great difficulty, and stopping several times on the road to rest himself. Lying down in the day time, was with him, an unusual thing; but now, yielding to necessity, he lay for some hours. Being over-fatigued and feverish, sleep fled from him; but he was happy in God, and engaged in forming plans of future usefulness. The next day, though very unwell, he indulged the hope of being able to preach in the evening, in his own place, which was four miles distant in the country. Mrs. Jackson, alarmed at his perseverance, strove to dissuade him from thus throwing away his small remains of strength, in attempting impossibilities. At that moment a local preacher came in, who kindly offered to preach for him, and he was prevailed upon to agree to be laid aside for one night. When most weary he often said, "We shall enjoy an eternal rest." On the Friday he continued unwell, but conversed freely, and prayed with some friends who visited him. Being convinced of his weakness, they dissuaded him from attempting any public exercise on the following sabbath. But, though he yielded to the importunities of his friends, and spent a sabbath without preaching, a most unusual thing with him, he was twice at the chapel, and in the evening, seemed to be much refreshed and comforted under the word. On Monday, not perceiving himself to be worse, he was very cheerful, and sat with his family at all their meals. Now he gave full proof that, as he had formerly said, he was willing to *spend and be spent* in the work of the Lord. His affectionate mind wished to impart to his congregation the Bread of Life. He loved their souls, and grieved that they should be for once disappointed

on his account. It was on this day, the last day he spent on earth, that, when as he was unable to walk, a friend offered to accommodate him with a horse, he formed the design of resuming his wonted course of labour. That evening he heard Mr. Millar preach at the Chapel, but was afterwards almost spent with walking up stairs to bed. He slept several hours in the night, but early on Tuesday morning awoke with violent pains. Between five and six he rose, and said to Mrs. Jackson, "I cannot continue long in this way." Alarmed at these words, she gave him some drops which had formerly administered relief. He took them, and almost immediately fainted. On coming to himself, he said, "I am going to die." Mrs. Jackson enquiring how he felt his mind, he answered, "Happy in God:" and added, "Do not leave me, my dear. I cannot continue long." Medical help was called. But it was too late. No human skill or power could recruit his exhausted frame.

During this state of extreme suffering, he exhorted all around him to praise the Lord: saying, "It is all right; glory, glory be to God." To Mrs. Wood, who was then attending, either to assist her dying pastor, or to administer comfort to his afflicted partner; he said, "Tell me now, sister Wood, do you not think I am going to die?" She said, if she must speak her mind, she thought him more likely for death than for life. He replied,— "That is as I think;" and added, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. In the Lord who sweetly die, they from all their toils are freed." Cold sweats succeeded the fainting fits, after which he was apparently better, yet he seemed sensible of his swiftly approaching dissolution, and said to one, "My wife and six children are strong ties, but I can give them all up." In this state of mind he had his distressed children called to the bed of their dying father. His ties to both worlds were strong. This last struggle was painful; but his strongest affections were placed on his God. His best and surest interests were beyond the grave.

Here were manifested the feelings of a father, and the triumphs of a Christian. The conquest of the world, the devil, and the

corruptions of nature had been comparatively easy. But now he gained the greatest victory. Grace triumphed over the purest and strongest ties of nature. Depending on the divine goodness, he committed his widow and fatherless children to the God of his life and all his mercies.

The weeping children heard their exhausted parent present to heaven his last prayer on their behalf: and received from his dying lips, a father's blessing, attended with a solemn charge, to take God for their Father, and to serve him in sincerity and truth all their days. From this time it might be said, the bitterness of death was past. In a happy tranquility of mind, he continued to breathe nothing but love and praise to God, save what little he spake in giving some necessary information concerning the Circuit accounts. Fully resigned to God, and patiently waiting for his change, he said, that he had little or no temptation from his grand enemy. That implacable foe, although he sometimes pursues the servants of God, even to the gates of Paradise, now quitted the field in despair, and left the christian conqueror to die in peace.

When asked, if he had still the same views of the doctrines he had so long preached, and if he still found them to be his support and comfort? He cheerfully answered, "O yes!" He said to one present, "Tell Mr. Millar, that he need not be afraid to die, dying is not such hard work." The last hour, he seemed to be in a great measure free from pain. His last breath was employed in sending messages of love to his absent friends and relations, and to his brethren the Preachers. While thus employed, as if taking leave of all below, his happy spirit left the mortal prison, and went to rest for ever in the bosom of its God.



MODERATION.

IT is next to unpardonable, that we can so often blame what we will not once mend. It shews that we know, but will not do our Master's will.

The true Genius and Spirit of Christianity productive of a certain Tenderness of Conscience, or feeling of Rectitude, more favourable to right Conduct, than any Deductions of unassisted Reason, or heathen Morality.

A MAN, rightly disposed by the influence of genuine Christianity becomes a law unto himself, in all circumstances and situations. A DIVINE TEMPER, superinduced by divine energy on the heart, produces right conduct, just as a tree grafted with a kindly scion brings forth fruit both delicious and salutary, under the natural operation of showers and sunshine.

A true Christian has constantly impressed upon his mind a sense of God's presence, and a conviction that he is responsible to his Father in heaven for all his conduct. This keeps him in awe, mixed with love. He fears to do wrong, not with a servile fear, but an affectionate reverence for his all-powerful friend, who has shewn him great favour, and at the same time required, in return for it, obedience to his injunctions, as a condition of his continuance. He loves God from his heart; an affection, which comprehends in it the love of every thing that is good in moral conduct, every thing pure and holy in his own person, every thing beneficent to society.

The residence of the Holy Ghost in the Christian's heart increases his moral sensibility. He sees with greater acuteness the good and beautiful in behaviour; he feels with additional vivacity the emotions of benevolence. It gives him pain, it does violence to his very nature, thus sublimed, to act basely, unjustly, unkindly. He knows that the divine principle within him will not inhabit a polluted shrine; but will take offence and depart, if the temple be profaned by immorality.

Casuistry, or long and abstruse reasonings on the moral fitness or unfitness of actions, are totally unnecessary to the man whom the heavenly teacher has instructed. His determinations admit not such cold delay or doubtful hesitation. His heart turns, like the needle to the pole, with tremulous, yet certain propensity, to

the point of rectitude. From the infirmity of human nature, and the violence of temptation, he may decline a little to the right or to the left ; but the attraction to Heaven and virtue still acts upon and prevents his total aberration. Touched by heaven, he acquires a kind of polarity, which causes him to point thither without any inclination to deviate.

Hence he is above the schools of the heathen moralists. He displays that superiority which Jesus Christ most justly claims over Socrates. Yet he may enjoy the beautiful compositions of the ancients, if his education has enabled him to understand them. He may be pleased and instructed with their fine observations on life and manners, and the great advances they made in ethics, by the light of nature. But though he may derive great benefit from them, though he may be both informed and advised by them, yet he sees them defective, and finds that they are not absolutely necessary to accomplish the Christian, who, by the written word of scripture, accompanied by the Spirit's ministration, becomes sufficiently enlightened for the practice of the purest morality, and wise unto salvation. By Christian philosophy, he experiences not only illumination, but assistance : he is taught the way that he should go, and led by the hand in his journey.

I conclude, then, from this tender sensibility to right and wrong, and this propensity to kindness, which the supernatural agency of the Spirit causes in the heart, that true Christianity, such as is founded on the vital influence of the Spirit, makes the best moralists, the most useful and worthiest members of society. And as Christian philosophy is attainable by **ALL**, and not confined to the rich or the learned, it appears to me, that even politicians, who consider only the prosperity and peace of nations, would evince the highest wisdom, in first cultivating it themselves, and then encouraging it, by all prudent modes, among the people.

When a whole community shall become, by the preaching of *evangelical* doctrines, and the *example of the great*, subject to the power of conscience, warmed with the love of God, and all

mankind, "just and good, true and sincere, meek, humble, tender-hearted, and compassionate, content, temperate, pure, and heavenly-minded, then will men become each a law to himself," and all civil government will be greatly facilitated, while the general happiness is secured without wars and fightings, without tumult and discord, without capital punishments, without any of that severe coercion, which creates partial evil for the sake of the general security.

Such a state, it will be said, is chimerical and Utopian. I fear, in the present corruptions of Christianity, it may be visionary. But every approach to it is desirable, as it is an approach to the happiness and perfection to which man is formed to aspire; and therefore, it will behove all those who possess power, not for sordid purposes, but the general good, to hasten and extend the reign of grace. They should say with heart as well as voice, **THY KINGDOM COME.**

A FINISHED CHARACTER DRAWN BY THE EVANGELISTS : AND ROUSSEAU'S ACCOUNT OF THE GOSPEL.

"THE four Evangelists have done, without appearing to have intended it, what was never performed by any authors before or since. They have drawn a perfect human character without a single flaw! They have given the history of one, whose spirit, words, and actions, were in every particular what they ought to have been: who always did the very thing which was proper, and in the best manner imaginable: who never once deviated from the most consummate wisdom, purity, benevolence, compassion, meekness, humility, fortitude, patience, piety, zeal, and every other excellency; and who in no instance let one virtue or holy disposition entrench on another; but exercised them all in entire harmony and exact proportion! The more the histories of the Evangelists are examined, the clearer will this appear; and the more evidently will it be perceived, that they all coincide in the view they give of their Lord's character. This subject challenges in-

vestigation, and sets infidelity at defiance! Either these four men exceeded in genius and capacity all the writers that ever lived, or they wrote under the special guidance of divine inspiration; for without labour or affectation they have effected, what hath baffled all others, who have set themselves purposely to accomplish it. Industry, ingenuity, and malice have, for ages, been employed in endeavoring to prove the Evangelists inconsistent with each other; but not a single contradiction has been proved upon them."

With this may be compared the account that Rousseau has given us of the gospel, which is the more remarkable, as it is from the pen of an enemy.

"I will confess to you," says he, "that the majesty of the scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the gospel hath its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers with all their pomp of diction: how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the scripture! Is it possible that a book, at once so simple and sublime, should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred personage, whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the tone of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manner! What an affecting gracefulness in his delivery! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind, what, subtlety, what truth in his replies! How great the command over his passions? Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live, and so die, without weakness and without ostentation? When Plato described his imaginary good man, loaded with all the shame of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ: the resemblance was so striking that all the Fathers perceived it. What prepossession, what blindness must it be, to compare the son of Sophroniscus to the son of Mary? What an infinite disproportion there is between them? Socrates dying without pain or ignominy,

easily supported his character to the last ; if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, was any thing more than a vain sophist. He invented, it is said, the theory of morals. Others, however, had before put them in practice ; he had only to say, therefore what they had done, and to reduce their examples to precepts. Aristides had been just before Socrates defined justice ; Leonidas had given up his life for his country before Socrates declared patriotism to be a duty ; the Spartans were a sober people before Socrates recommended sobriety ; before he had even defined virtue Greece abounded in virtuous men. But where could Jesus learn, among his competitors, that pure and sublime morality, of which he only hath given us both precept and example. The greatest wisdom was made known among the most bigoted fanaticism, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honour to the vilest people upon earth. The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophizing with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for ; that of Jesus expiring in the midst of agonizing pains, abused, insulted, and accused by a whole nation, is the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates in receiving the poison, blessed indeed the weeping executioner who administered it ; but Jesus, in the midst of excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God. Shall we suppose the evangelic history a mere fiction ? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction ; on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition, in fact, only shifts the difficulty, without obviating it : it is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that only one should furnish the history of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the gospel, the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable, that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than a hero."

MEN OF THE WORLD ILL JUDGES OF WHAT IS PLEAS-
ING TO GOD.

THE wise ones of the world would do well to call to mind, who it is that hath said, That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. Luke xvi. 15. Compare 1 Cor. i. 26—29. Men, sects, and parties, who are held in the highest estimation by the world, are held in the lowest estimation by God; and, those, who are held in the lowest estimation by the world, are held in the highest estimation by the Almighty.

The way to heaven prescribed by the scripture, and the way to heaven prescribed by worldly-minded men, are as opposite to each other as the east to the west. The former saith, Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. The latter say, Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth unto life, and many there be which go in thereat. Persons of this character are usually secure and confident, determined and resolute, merry and jovial, and perceive little or no danger even when they are dancing blind-fold on the brink of destruction. A man who turned all serious godliness into ridicule and contempt, declared there was no need of so much ado, for if he had but time to say three words, "Lord save me," he did not doubt but he should go to heaven. Not long after, this confident Gallio was riding a spirited horse over a bridge, upon which he met a flock of sheep; the horse took fright, leaped over the battlement into the river, where his rider was drowned, and the last three words he was heard to speak were, Devil—take—all—It is dangerous to provoke God.

DEATH OF WESLEY AND TOPLADY.

IT may be safely asserted that all truly serious and religiously minded people are nearly of one opinion concerning the great doctrines of the gospel. They live in the comfort and die in the faith of them. The Calvinist and Arminian here are of one mind. When WESLEY came to die, his language was,

"I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me."

"There is no way into the holiest, but by the blood of Jesus."

"I'll praise my Maker with my breath," &c.

TOPLADY also was supported with divine consolations during his last sickness. A few days before his death he said to a friend: "It is impossible to describe how good God is to me. This afternoon I have enjoyed such a season, such sweet communion with God, and such delightful manifestations of his presence with, and love to my soul, that it is impossible for words, or any language to express them. I have had peace and joy unutterable. The comforts and manifestations of God's love are so abundant, as to render my state and condition the most desirable in the world. I would not exchange my condition with any one upon earth."

The same friend calling upon him a day or two before his death, he said, with hands clasped, and his eyes lifted up and starting with tears of the most evident joy: "I cannot tell you the comforts I feel in my soul. They are past expression. The consolations of God to such an unworthy wretch are so abundant, that he leaves me nothing to pray for, but a continuance of them, I enjoy a heaven already in my soul. My prayers are all converted into praise.—

"O how this soul of mine longs to be gone! Like a bird imprisoned in a cage, it longs to take its flight. O that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away to the realms of bliss, and be at rest forever! O that some guardian angel might be commissioned; for I long to be absent from this body, and to be with my Lord forever.—

"O what a day of sun-shine has this been to me! I have not words to express it. It is unutterable. O, my friends, how good is God! Almost without interruption his presence has been with me.—

"O what delights! Who can fathom the joys of the third heaven? The sky is clear; there is no cloud; come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Poetry.

MAN WAS BORN TO WEEP.

LATE I saw the murky cloud
Deep'ning in the black Northeast ;
There I heard the thunder loud ;—
But the threat'ning gloom has ceas'd.

O'er the frozen western lakes
Lately swept the chilling blast ;
Late the snow, in thick'ning flakes,
Fell—but now the storm is past.

On the wing of Auster borne,
Furious rush'd the whelming show'r
But the genial sun's return
Soon forbad the rain to pour.

Soon the thunders cease to roll,
Winds and show'rs and tempests sleep ;
But the *tempests of the soul*
Long their dreadful empire keep.

Long *misfortune's* darkness low'rs ;
Disappointment's chilling blast,
Sorrow's unavailing show'rs
Long the troubled mind o'er cast.

Ev'n when time begins to soothe,
Mem'ry rouses pain from sleep,
Urging hard this awful truth :
“ Hapless man was born to weep”.